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Faculty Senate Minutes, April 7, 2008

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Doug Ramsey called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Byron Burnham motioned that the minutes of March 3, 2008, be approved as submitted. Sylvia Read seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Announcements

Doug Ramsey reminded everyone to sign the roster and that there will be another Faculty Senate Meeting on April 28.

University Business

President Albrecht has been meeting individually with each college to discuss various issues. Effective April 1 we are no longer charging sales tax on required textbooks and course materials. Faculty members need to be clear on their syllabus what students will be asked to purchase so there is no confusion on required vs. optional purchases. Contact Fred Hunsaker, Vice President of Business and Finance, with any questions.

At the Legislature's request, an interim site committee is looking at reorganizing higher education government. We have no idea what to expect, but there may be a major shift in higher education. A more critical issue is non lapsing balances. The President reminded faculty members that if they have a choice, they need to spend state dollars first and carry forward any other sources. If enrollment numbers are solid in the fall and we generate more Tier II funding, there will be a mid-year compression issues review to determine our major priorities. We should know where we stand by the third week of class so there will be more discussion about it at that time.

Information Items

Commencement

Sydney Peterson stated that graduation ceremonies will be the same as last year. The graduate commencement and hooding ceremony will be held on Friday, May 2, at 1:30 p.m. Candidates need to line up at the Field House at 12:30 p.m. On Saturday, faculty need to line up with undergraduate students at 8:30 a.m. on the Quad. The ceremony starts at 9:30 a.m. with individual college ceremonies after that. A complete schedule can be found on the commencement website.

Honorary Degree and Awards Committee Report

Ed Reeve distributed the committee report and press release of the five individuals who will be receiving Honorary Degrees at the undergraduate commencement ceremony. Larry Stevens will serve as Chair of the Honorary Degree and Awards Committee next year.

Academic Integrity Policy

Steve Hanks stated that the procedures are designed to strengthen the policy and provide fair due process for students while maintaining faculty rights to oversee grading in the classroom. This is the concept piece and they will write the supporting code this summer. It will include examples of what constitutes an egregious offense. Jeri Brunson reviewed the flowchart provided with the agenda. Robert Schmidt pointed out that the flowchart did not allow for the initial discussion between the instructor and the accused student. Steve stated they were just trying to establish a formal process. Renee Galliher asked if issues could be handled within the classroom or if they had to report any sanctions. Steve stated that no one would police them, but if it is not reported there is no way to know if the student is doing the same thing in other classes. They are not trying to change an instructor's process; they are just developing a tracking system. Will Popendorf asked if other students could make an accusation without the professor being aware of it. Geri stated it would be most helpful if the students went to the instructor, but the form

would not come into place until the instructor determines there is a likelihood that cheating occurred. The question was raised as to how students would be contacted if they do not have an email address. Geri stated that according to code, students are responsible for providing the university with a current address and email address. A paper trail is the only way to track things, but there needs to be a discussion between the instructor and student. Diane Calloway-Graham pointed out that the procedure gives students the option to refuse to meet with the professor, but that is unacceptable in her college. Steve stated that the procedures do not supersede any department policies. Please email any further thoughts to Geri or Steve.

Criminal Background Checks

David Cowley stated that USU will be implementing a criminal background check policy in response to the 2007 Legislative Session. It is proposed that we perform background checks on new employees whose positions involve significant contact with minors or are considered security sensitive, existing employees who exhibit signs of reasonable cause, and concurrent enrollment faculty who have unsupervised access to K-12 students. The definition of 'significant contact' will be determined by Human Resources. The search will be performed by using the prospective employee's social security number. The cost is \$40 per applicant and it will be paid by the hiring department. Ed Reeve asked about the possibility of an international search. Dave stated that it was available and the cost varied from \$40 up to several hundred dollars based on the complexity of the search. Typically the background check is performed after you determine who you want to hire, but before you make the offer. The question was raised as to whether it would be more cost efficient to perform the background check before going to the expense to bring a candidate to campus. The Provost stated that departments could request the background check whenever they wish. The turnaround time is 1.6 days to perform the check. Steve Burr asked about performing a background check on existing employees. Dave stated that for now they are only planning on doing them if there is reasonable cause. In the future they may expand it to all employees, but it would not be written as part of the policy. The Provost stated he was concerned about the underlying message that is conveyed when a background is performed because there is reasonable cause. He questioned whether that would put the university at greater risk for liability if they missed someone. He would prefer a plan that states we will perform a background check on all employees. Steve Burr asked who would be on the review committee. Dave stated there would be representation from the employee groups, Human Resources, and central administration. It will be a small group so they can get together quickly to respond and react to any positive results. Individuals with a positive result will be allowed to respond with their side of the story. Adjunct and part time employees will continue to be asked to self-disclose any offenses. Someone pointed out that those are the positions we should be most concerned about because they can slip through the cracks. There were also concerns about an effect on the Academic Impact and Freedom Committee and whether candidates would be offended to have a background check performed on them. The Provost stated that the details of the checks are completely confidential and that background checks are becoming common and are performed at the largest and most prestigious institutions. Dave reminded everyone that this is new policy and they will do their best to implement it, but they prefer to start with the group we are legally required to do and then take it from there when the process is going well.

Relocation Assistance Policy

David Cowley stated that the IRS now requires that any money given to new employee for relocation assistance will have state and federal taxes withheld. The employee can file for any eligible deductions when they do their taxes. It is recommended that we pay the moving company directly whenever possible.

FDDE Business Code 405.7.2 Proposal

Ronda Callister provided two options for change to Section 405.7.2(1) and 405.8.3(1). Option A would allow a promotion and tenure candidate to submit up to two names of potential reviewers that they do not want to be contacted. Option B would allow the candidate to submit an unlimited number of names of potential reviewers they do not want to be contacted. Dallas Holmes motioned that Option B be forwarded to the PRPC. Steve Burr seconded the motion. Byron Burnham questioned why this was necessary. Ronda stated that there could be strong paradigm differences in research approaches that could adversely affect the faculty member and that even if the code is rarely needed, it would be in the faculty members best interest to have it in place. The Provost stated that it would be uncommon for the advising

committee to be unaware of such differences that could have an adverse affect on the faculty member. He questioned why the department head or supervisor and tenure advisory committee would be trusted enough to mentor the faculty member, but not to select an appropriate review committee. Steve Burr stated that it was possible that a committee member may not understand the field of research. Renee Galliher agreed and stated that most people will not submit names, but this would allow them that option. Dean Anderson worried that listing names could have an adverse effect and be misused. Pat Lambert stated it would just open the door for dialogue. Byron Burnham pointed out that they may unknowingly remove someone that would have been a strong voice in support of their good work. Will Pependorf suggested that they be required to provide the rationale of any names they submit. Ronda stated she was aware of an incident where the candidate had filed a sexual harassment claim against someone and a member of the review committee was a colleague with the accused. They wrote a negative letter against the candidate. Doug reminded everyone that there had been a motion and a second to forward the suggested code change to the PRPC and called for a final vote. The motion passed.

Consent Agenda

PRPC Annual Report and EPC Report

Mike Parent motioned that the reports be accepted. Jeff Larsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Key Issues and Action Items

Faculty Evaluation Committee Report and Course Evaluation Form

Mike Lyons discussed the report that was submitted with the agenda packet. The committee performed a pilot test with the new evaluation form in Summer 2006 and almost all students with a preference preferred the new evaluation form. The Faculty Senate can accept it as is or reject it and request that it be returned to the committee for further work. Doran Baker motioned that version two be adopted. Diane Calloway-Graham seconded the motion. Nat Frazer recommended using a standardized form with questions that have been proven valid and reliable rather than creating our own. Byron Burnham requested that it be called a rating form, not an evaluation form. Mike stated their mandate did not include looking at commercially standardized forms, but they would be willing to do so if requested. They could also perform beta testing to see if the form works for us. He added that there are on-line forms that would allow each college to add additional questions of their own, but there has been a lot of opposition to the idea of on-line evaluation forms. He stated that both versions would still include a section for comments. Doug called for a vote on the motion on the table. The motion failed. Pat Lambert motioned that the committee consult a professional advisor and investigate the use of a commercially available evaluation form. Sylvia Read seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Committee on Committees – Will Pependorf

- a. **Election of Senate President Elect**
- b. **Nomination of Senate President Elect.** There are two openings and no new names were nominated. The ballot was accepted as is.
- c. **Announcement of Senator Interest Form.** Will Pependorf distributed a form and stated he would hand it out again at the next meeting, but requested that everyone read it before then. If you are unable to attend the next meeting, please fill out this form and turn it in. There are a lot of expiring terms. Please work with your college to elect new executive committee members as needed.

Adjournment

It was motioned and seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Tammy Firth, Office of the Provost, 797-1840